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Addresses delivered to the
International American Conference

James G. Blaine



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ADDRESSES

DELIVERED BY

JAMES G. BLAINE

PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE





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INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE.

OPENING AND CLOSING ADDRESSES

BY

JAMES G. BLAINE,

President of the Conference.

OCTOBER 2, 1889, AND APRIL 19, 1890.

WASHINGTON:
DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

1890.

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OPENING ADDRESS,

Delivered in the Diplomatic Room of the Department of State,
October 2, 1889.

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GENTLEMEN OF THE INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE: Speaking for the Government of the United States, I bid you welcome to this Capital. Speaking for the People of the United States, I bid you welcome to every section and to every State of the Union. You come in response to an invitation extended by the President on the special authorization of Congress. Your presence here is no ordinary event. It signifies much to the People of all America to-day. It may signify far more in the days to come. No Conference of nations has ever assembled to consider the welfare of territorial possessions so vast and to contemplate the possibilities of a future so

great and so inspiring. Those now sitting within these walls are empowered to speak for nations whose borders are on both the great oceans, whose northern limits are touched by the Arctic waters for a thousand miles beyond the Straits of Behring, whose southern extension furnishes human habitations farther below the equator than is elsewhere possible on the globe. The nations here represented fall but little short of twelve millions of square miles in their aggregate territorial extent,—more than three times the area of all Europe, and but little less than one-fourth part of the globe; while in respect to the power of producing the articles which are essential to human life, and those which minister to life's luxury, they constitute even a larger proportion of the entire world. These great possessions to-day have a population approaching one hundred and twenty millions; but if peopled as densely

as the average of Europe, the total number would exceed one thousand millions.

While considerations of this character must inspire Americans, both South and North, with the liveliest anticipations of future grandeur and power, they must also impress them with a sense of the gravest responsibility touching the character and development of their respective nationalities. The delegates whom I am addressing can do much to establish permanent relations of confidence, respect, and friendship between the nations which they represent. They can show to the world an honorable and peaceful conference of eighteen independent American Powers, in which all shall meet together on terms of absolute equality; a conference in which there can be no attempt to coerce a single delegate against his own conception of the interests of his nation; a conference which will permit no secret understanding

on any subject, but will frankly publish to the world all its conclusions; a conference which will tolerate no spirit of conquest, but will aim to cultivate an American sympathy as broad as both continents; a conference which will form no selfish alliance against the older nations from which we are proud to claim inheritance; a conference, in fine, which will seek nothing, propose nothing, endure nothing that is not in the general sense of all the delegates timely and wise and peaceful.

And yet we can not be expected to forget that our common fate has made us inhabitants of the two continents which, at the close of four centuries, are still regarded beyond the seas as the new world. Like situations beget like sympathies and impose like duties. We meet in the firm belief that the nations of America ought to be and can be more helpful, each to the other, than they now are, and that each will

find advantage and profit from an enlarged intercourse with the others.

We believe that we should be drawn together more closely by the highways of the sea, and that at no distant day the railway systems of the North and South will meet upon the Isthmus and connect by land routes the political and commercial capitals of all America.

We believe that hearty coöperation, based on hearty confidence, will save all American states from the burdens and evils which have long and cruelly afflicted the older nations of the world.

We believe that a spirit of justice, of common and equal interest, between the American states, will leave no room for an artificial balance of power like unto that which has led to wars abroad and drenched Europe in blood.

We believe that friendship, avowed with candor and maintained with good faith, will

remove from American states the necessity of guarding boundary lines between themselves with fortifications and military force.

We believe that standing armies, beyond those which are needful for public order and the safety of internal administration, should be unknown on both American continents.

We believe that friendship and not force, the spirit of just law and not the violence of the mob, should be the recognized rule of administration between American nations and in American nations.

To these subjects, and those which are cognate thereto, the attention of this Conference is earnestly and cordially invited by the Government of the United States. It will be a great gain when we shall acquire that common confidence on which all international friendship must rest. It will be a greater gain when we shall be able to draw the people of all

American nations into closer acquaintance with each other, an end to be facilitated by more frequent and more rapid intercommunication. It will be the greatest gain when the personal and commercial relations of the American states, South and North, shall be so developed and so regulated that each shall acquire the highest possible advantage from the enlightened and enlarged intercourse of all.

Before the Conference shall formally enter upon the discussion of the subjects to be submitted to it, I am instructed by the President to invite all the delegates to be the guests of the Government of the United States during a proposed visit to various sections of the country, with the double purpose of showing to our friends from abroad the condition of our country, and of giving to our own people, in their own homes, the privilege and pleasure of extending the warm welcome of Americans to Americans.

CLOSING ADDRESS,

Delivered in the Hall of the International American Conference, April 19, 1890.

GENTLEMEN : I withhold for a moment the word of final adjournment, in order that I may express to you the profound satisfaction with which the Government of the United States regards the work that has been accomplished by the International American Conference. The importance of the subjects which have claimed your attention, the comprehensive intelligence and watchful patriotism which you have brought to their discussion, must challenge the confidence and secure the admiration of the governments and peoples whom you represent; while that larger patriotism which constitutes the fraternity of nations has received from you an impulse such as the world has not before seen.

The extent and value of all that has been worthily achieved by your Conference can not be measured to-day. We stand too near it. Time will define and heighten the estimate of your work ; experience will confirm our present faith ; final results will be your vindication and your triumph.

If, in this closing hour, the Conference had but one deed to celebrate, we should dare call the world's attention to the deliberate, confident, solemn dedication of two great continents to Peace and to the prosperity which has Peace for its foundation. We hold up this new *Magna Charta*, which abolishes war and substitutes Arbitration between the American Republics, as the first and great fruit of the International American Conference ! That noblest of Americans, the aged poet and philanthropist Whittier, is the first to send his salutation and his benediction, declaring : "If in the spirit of

peace the American Conference agrees upon a rule of Arbitration which shall make war in this hemisphere well-nigh impossible, its session will prove one of the most important events in the history of the world."

May I express to you, gentlemen, my deep appreciation of the honor you did me in calling me to preside over your deliberations. Your kindness has been unceasing, and for your words of approval I offer you my sincerest gratitude.

Invoking the blessing of Almighty God upon the patriotic and fraternal work which has been here begun for the good of mankind, I now declare the International American Conference adjourned without day.

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